/9 cont./

114 This shows that nothing has changed since 1948, when Métraux,
178 following the accounts of Koch-Grünberg and other investigators
181 traveling through this region, quite justifiably wrote: "The
648 Shirianá are very warlike people who succeeded in dominating several weaker tribes" /cited in English/ (42).

42. Métraux, 1948, p. 861.

141 V. Physical Characteristics

With regard to physical characteristics, the Surára and Pakidái are identical. Their height is below average, for the men are only 1.50-1.60 meters tall and the women 1.40-1.50 meters.
142 Both sexes have soft but muscular body forms, yet frequently a protruding abdomen and often relatively thin legs. Since they
[291] always go barefoot, their feet have retained the ability to serve as prehensile organs for climbing tree trunks, and their toes are not squeezed together as much as in the case of civilized persons who wear shoes all the time. The considerable gap between the great toe and the second toe is striking (Ill. 14) (43). The color

43. Crevaux has already pointed this out in connection with the Oyampí Indians in French Guiana: "The great toe, very much set apart, always turns inward, while the third, fourth, and fifth are turned outward" /translated from the French/ (Crevaux, 1880, p. 76 and ill., left).

of their skin is very light, almost white. The forehead of the dolicocephalic head is often flat. Their broad noses with the nostrils directed slightly upward are noteworthy; the root of the nose, on the other hand, is narrow. The Mongoloid strain is clearly evident in the prominent cheekbones and the slanting, dark-brown, almost black-looking eyes. Between the slightly

/187 cont./

105 The Guaika (Waica) are considered by the above-mentioned author as "the natives with the most primitive and wild life of all those inhabiting the great region of the Venezuelan Guayana..." They have an incipient agriculture; they cultivate bananas and plantains as the principal basis of their diet, which they complement with the fruit of the pijiguao palm. They practice endocannibalism, consuming the bones of the cremated dead.

Their hammocks are knotted, their houses are triangular, and they use bows and arrows of various types, according to their uses. They keep the bones of many animals, travel by land, very rarely by water, and build bridges similar to the style of the Guaharibo (Sanemá).

/188/ Regarding the Shirianna (Casapare), Montoya says (1958) that "the real Shirianna live on the banks of river, building very stable settlements and devoting themselves to an agriculture already relatively advanced." They obtain curiaras from the Mayoncon, but have also learned to make their own, although in a rudimentary way. They use bows and arrows for hunting, but "above everything else, they are traders and travelers. They constantly travel into Brazil, leaving from the upper Paragua, using the route of the Shoropae River, Urarikuera and Parima, to Boavista." They differ from the other natives of the Paragua basin in that they are tall and strong, healthy, and well nourished.

114 101 The last report on the Yanoama of the northeast was published by Gheerbrandt (1955, pp. 345-349), and in this report there appears for the first time the name Kaserapai, which must be an orthographic variation of the name Casapare which we use to designate a whole subtribe and not only a local group as the above-named author has done.

101 114 648 Navigating the Uraricuera in the year 1950, Gheerbrandt met and heard of various Yanoama groups with different names. Very near the Sierra Marutani he came upon the Guadema on the left bank of the river named. The Guadema were very much afraid of the Kaserapai, who had killed the majority of the Guadema and were in open conflict with Waikas and Waitschas on the Uraricuera. It is possible that this may be a reference to an encounter between Sanemá, Waica, and Casapare groups, but the extant data offer no certainty in this regard.

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoam SQ18
Sanema

men, painted a terrifying red. Momi took up his position behind the palisade of our hut, found a gap and thrust the barrel of the gun through it. We were at a loss to know what to do with the other gun. It scared us more than it ever scared the savages.

I'd always been sceptical of tales about the ferocity of primitive peoples. This was the moment to display my scepticism. We therefore let things take their course, as if the arrival at our hut of a horde of naked dwarfs, all painted red and armed with long bows and arrows, was the most natural event in the world, the sort of thing we'd been used to from childhood days in our own homeland. The Indians adopted just this tactic towards us! The moment came when we were surrounded by a mass of revelling, skipping little monsters, like goats at pasture. The womenfolk hung behind, hesitating to show themselves: many of them had children at the breast, and they feared the very sight of our beards would terrify them, and even cause their death through the 'evil eye'. Gathering them protectively to their bosoms, they laughed rather nervously and echoed the tongue-clicking that punctuated the chatter and the bewildering howls of the male Shirians. For these *were* the Shirians—the real thing, unlike Pancho's hewers of wood who lived now as mere vassals and had adopted the customs of the Soto.

One old fellow stood out among the rest. His hair was ruffled; he wore a perpetual smile and dangling testicles. '*Auai*,' he declared, '*auai, auai*,' ending up with a clicking of his tongue and grunting deeply and explosively from his chest. We didn't then know that '*auai*' meant simply 'yes' in Shirian; we therefore called the old man Auai. Later we came to know him for the chief of the Uana-Dildep tribe, whose camp lay one day's march east of Kirisochi. Auai was intelligent and quick-witted, but his people were plunderers, infinitely resourceful. While the chief was smiling at the magazine photographs of actresses we had brought with us—he didn't understand what they were, but they drew his interest—his men and women, with methodical efficiency, were attempting to slip their pilfering hands through the cracks between the stakes that formed our back wall and make off with what they could. If the gap was too narrow for the grown-ups' hands, they maliciously urged on the children to try theirs. This innocent little game was one which it would have been interesting to observe from start to finish; unfortunately there was our dignity to be considered, as well as the old chief's integrity of character to be reckoned with. Laughing, he joined in as we chased off the women and children, and

6: Vinci T 5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

something to help us put on a little speed, he would only smile, show us his foot, and say '*Nini, nini*'—hurt, pain. So we called him Nini, but it did not rouse him from his lethargy. Finally we took him into our own boat, which was the heaviest, and put his wife as steersman. [123]

We were five days on the water altogether, and on the fifth we had a curious encounter. Rounding a curve of the stream, we came upon an absolutely diminutive canoe. Three young Shirians were sitting in it, silently waiting for us. Two of them we knew already from the Yevarehuri landing, where unknown Shirians had often come to have a look at our baggage when Elia was guarding it. There must have been some understanding between these three young fellows and our crew, because the encounter caused nobody any surprise, and the new boat joined our expedition.

I had seen more reassuring sights than these three vagabonds, but we weren't altogether sorry to have met them, all the same. It meant that at last we had a crew with a decent proportion of fit men. Physically fit, at any rate: what their morale was like the future would show—and the future was a very unknown quantity in the valleys of Parime.

The three youths were magnificent specimens of savages. They had impenetrable eyes, a fierce aspect and wonderful muscles. Authentic brigands, they looked, or soldiers of fortune ready to go anywhere and do anything—especially if it was anything bad. Carmine swore that two of them bore a striking resemblance to two brothers of his whom he had left behind in Italy—a pronouncement which led to our calling them 'The Brothers'.

They were prodigiously active and agile, and their entry into the picture put new life into our expedition, which so far had been moving with the slow and stumbling pace of Nini himself. But how the three brigands happened to turn up like that we never did get clear. They had started before us, and we rather suspected that they had not only been all along the river already, but had made their way over the cordillera too, and were coming back when we met them.

Indians by nature are essentially false, their falsity consisting in a trick of believing—and asserting—not what is true, but what is desirable or even just convenient. This intrinsic falsity made us wonder now. Had the brothers gone ahead to the cordillera to warn some Guayca tribe, who were even now preparing to ambush us and steal our goods? It looked very suspicious, but whatever they had in store for us we should have to accept, because there was no [181]

*621 White's generalization that

> every society tends to behave in such a way as to achieve that balance between size and solidarity that will give it the maximum effectiveness in carrying on its life-sustaining activities. (1959:104)

*621 *628 562 583 582 721 Belligerent ideology and aggressive behavior

Village size plays an important role in the nature of the political relationships between groups that are not linked by kinship ties. As mentioned above, larger villages tend to use their strength and dominance to upset the exchange balance of women. But the degree to which a powerful group is able to force a dependent ally to cede women is limited by the ability of the smaller group to raid the *621 *628 larger village successfully. In ideological terms the Yanomamö express this capacity to wage war by placing 721 152 181 emphasis on and valuing aggressive behavior. It is considered both proper and desirable to act ferociously, as this informs neighbors of the group's capacity to wage war and warns them that the group is willing to resort to war in political dealings.

*621 *628 526 574 152 Members of small villages are consequently constrained to behave militantly toward larger neighbors to limit the coercion that the larger group may be tempted to try. Their fierce behavior takes the form of threat, bluff, chicanery in trading and, most important, challenges to duels. Frequently, when villagers are invited to feast with an allied group, the invitation includes a challenge to a chest-pounding

cruel actions; that is, the extent to which husbands are brutal to their wives is largely a function of the number of kinsmen the women have within the village, particularly brothers. Some men have even killed their wives in fits of rage, but in all the cases for which I have complete data, the women came from other villages and had no kinsmen in their husband's village to protect them. Conversely, when women have brothers within the village, their husbands exercise restraint in their treatment of them, knowing that the brothers of the women will use force to defend them. It is not unusual for a man to take his sister away from a cruel husband and to give her to someone else; this inevitably leads to club-fighting and frequently causes the village to split.

Ideological considerations, therefore, promote friction and fighting within villages and lead to village splits; and, the newly formed factions are obliged to seek marriage alliances with other groups.

Economic practices

Local groups abandon residential and horticultural sites only when forced to do so by the raiding pattern of their enemies. For the most part, the Yanomamö are able to predict the hostilities that will force them to abandon their gardens, and they plan accordingly. The first act of a war is frequently the clearing of a new garden at some distance from the presently occupied site. If hostilities develop within the village and it is expected that these will

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Foreword

About the Series

These case studies in cultural anthropology are designed to bring to students, in beginning and intermediate courses in the social sciences, insights into the richness and complexity of human life as it is lived in different ways and in different places. They are written by men and women who have lived in the societies they write about and who are professionally trained as observers and interpreters of human behavior. The authors are also teachers, and in writing their books they have kept the students who will read them foremost in their minds. It is our belief that when an understanding of ways of life very different from one's own is gained, abstractions and generalizations about social structure, cultural values, subsistence techniques, and the other universal categories of human social behavior become meaningful.

About the Author

Napoleon Chagnon was born the second of twelve children in Port Austin, Michigan, in 1938. He is married and has two children. At present he is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology and holds a joint appointment as Research Associate in the Department of Human Genetics, University of Michigan Medical School. This department has developed a long-term project for the study of the Yąnomamö from a medical-genetics viewpoint in a team approach involving specialists in several fields. Dr. Chagnon is the ethnological member of the team. He began his academic training in the Michigan College of Mining and Technology, but switched to anthropology, receiving a B.A. in anthropology at the University of Michigan in 1961, an M.A. in 1963, and a Ph.D. in 1966. He has spent nineteen months in direct contact with the Yąnomamö of Venezuela and Brazil, studying demography, social organization, and warfare, and about one month with the Carib-speaking Makiritare of Brazil and Venezuela, studying social organization. He has published several articles in *Natural History* and *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* and has presented papers at meetings of the American Anthropological Association and the National Academy of Science. He plans to return to the Yąnomamö in several field trips over the next three years, having completed two cooperative trips with members of the Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas.

About the Book

This is indeed a book about a fierce people. Yąnomamö culture, in its major focus, reverses the meanings of "good" and "desirable" as phrased in the ideal postulates of the Judaic-Christian tradition. A high capacity for rage, a quick flash point, and a will-

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181 ingness to use violence to obtain one's ends are considered desirable traits. Much of the behavior of the Yąnomamö can be described as brutal, cruel, treacherous, in the value-
[114] laden terms of our own vocabulary. The Yąnomamö themselves, however, as Napoleon Chagnon came to intimately know them in the year and a half he lived with them, do not all appear to be mean and treacherous. As individuals, they seem to be people playing their own cultural game, with internal feelings that at times may be quite divergent from
[121] the demands placed upon them by their culture. This case study furnishes valuable data for phrasing questions about the relationship between the individual and his culture.
[206] The Yąnomamö appear to be constantly on the verge of extranormal behavior, as we define it, and their almost daily use of hallucinogenic drugs reinforces these drives to what might seem to the outside observer to be the limits of human capacity. Life in their villages is noisy, punctuated by outbursts of violence, threatened by destruction by enemies. To the ethnographer it is frightening, frustrating, disgusting, exciting, and rewarding, and in this case study the ethnographer lets the reader know how he feels. His honest reactions help us, as interested outsiders, to know the Yąnomamö.

121 This is a study of a fierce people who engage in chronic warfare. It is also a study
926 of a system of controls that usually hold in check the drive toward annihilation. Conflict among the Yąnomamö is regulated through a series of graded escalations, from chest-pounding and side-slapping duels, through club fighting, spear throwing, to raiding in a state of war, to the ultimate—the *nomoboni*—massacre by treachery. The processes of avoidance, settlement, or escalation of disputes are discussed in detail in this case study. There are implications that range beyond the Yąnomamö, and beyond primitive peoples, to the "civilized" world in which we live, for we too live in a state of chronic warfare and are threatened by annihilation.

121 The Yąnomamö goad each other, within their own villages, to the brink of an
578 explosion (and they goaded the ethnographer in the same way). This hostility is
[123] projected on a larger scale in the negotiating of alliances between villages. Each principal must establish the credibility of his own threats, as well as discover the point at which the opposite party's bluffing will dissolve into action. It is, as the author says, a politics of brinksmanship, all too familiar to us.

128 The study is, however, not confined to a description of regulated violence. Dr. Chagnon provides us with an unusually clear chapter on social organization, with the genealogical details of kinship. The models he produces in his analysis are cast in sharper relief because he also discusses deviations from these models in actual behavior. He links social organization with the processes of fission that produce new villages and the alliances that are created in response to the threat of annihilation, reinforced and validated by the mutual ceding of women between villages. Social organization is presented not as an abstraction but as a dynamic process interrelated with other significant dimensions of life. The anthropological novice will find the analysis of social organization detailed but, with close attention, entirely understandable. The more experienced anthropological reader will grasp the full theoretical implications of the analysis and will find the author's references to various debates in the anthropological literature stimulating.

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Doing Fieldwork among the Yąnomamö

THE YĄNOMAMÖ[1] INDIANS live in southern Venezuela and the adjacent portions of northern Brazil (see frontispiece map, p. iv). Some 125 widely scattered villages have populations ranging from 40 to 250 inhabitants, with 75 to 80 people the most usual number. In total numbers their population probably approaches 10,000 people, but this is merely a guess. Many of the villages have not yet been contacted by outsiders, and nobody knows for sure exactly how many uncontacted villages there are, or how many people live in them. By comparison to African or Melanesian tribes, the Yąnomamö population is small. Still, they are one of the largest unacculturated tribes left in all of South America.

But they have a significance apart from tribal size and cultural purity: the Yąnomamö are still actively conducting warfare. It is in the nature of man to fight, according to one of their myths, because the blood of "Moon" spilled on this layer of the cosmos, causing men to become fierce. I describe the Yąnomamö as "the fierce people" because that is the most accurate single phrase that describes them. That is how they conceive themselves to be, and that is how they would like others to think of them.

I spent nineteen months with the Yąnomamö,[2] during which time I acquired some proficiency in their language and, up to a point, submerged myself in their culture and _____ way of life.

[1]The word Yąnomamö is nasalized through its entire length, indicated by the diacritical mark [ą]. When this mark appears on a word, the entire word is nasalized. The terminal vowel [-ö] represents a sound that does not occur in the English language. It corresponds to the phone [ɨ] of linguistic orthography. In normal conversation, Yąnomamö is pronounced like "Yah-no-mama," except that *it* is nasalized. Finally, the words having the [-ä] vowel are pronounced at that vowel with the "uh" sound of "duck." Thus, the name Kąobawä would be pronounced "cow-ba-wuh," again nasalized.

[2]I spent a total of twenty-three months in South America of which nineteen were spent among the Yąnomamö on three separate field trips. The first trip, November 1964 through February 1966, was to Venezuela. During this time I spent thirteen months in direct contact with the Yąnomamö, using my periodic trips back to Caracas to visit my family and to collate the genealogical data I had collected up to that point. On my second trip, January through March 1967, I spent two months among Brazilian Yąnomamö and one more month with the Venezuelan Yąnomamö. Finally, I returned to Venezuela for three more months among the Yąnomamö, January through April 1968.

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Fig. *Members of allied villages engaged in a chest-pounding duel which followed a feast.*

way of life. The thing that impressed me most was the importance of aggression in their culture. I had the opportunity to witness a good many incidents that expressed individual vindictiveness on the one hand and collective bellicosity on the other. These ranged in seriousness from the ordinary incidents of wife beating and chest pounding to dueling and organized raiding by parties that set out with the intention of ambushing and killing men from enemy villages (Fig. 1–1). One of the villages discussed in the chapters that follow was raided approximately twenty-five times while I conducted the fieldwork, six times by the group I lived among.

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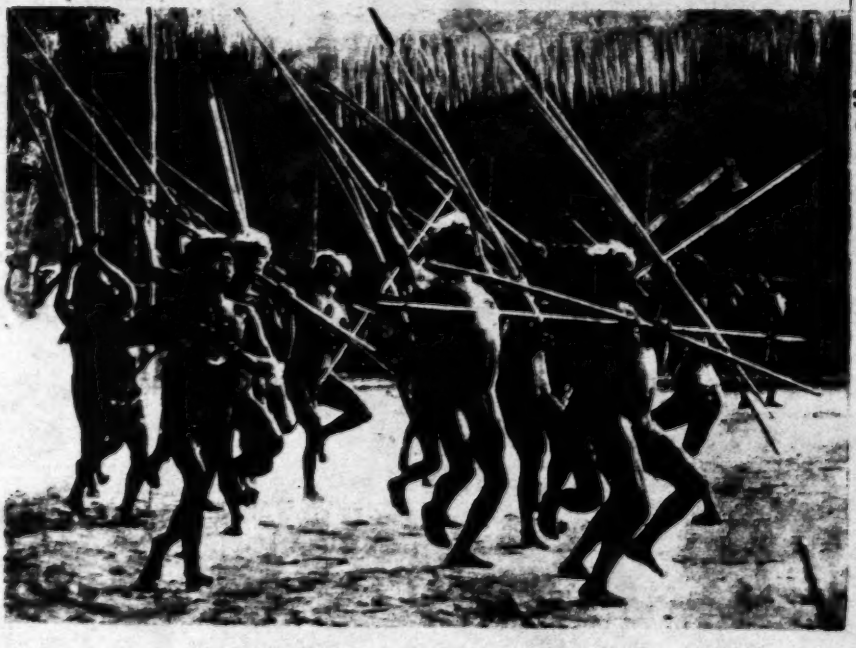
The fact that the Yąnomamö live in a state of chronic warfare is reflected in their mythology, values, settlement pattern, political behavior, and marriage practices. Accordingly, I have organized this case study in such a way that students can appreciate the effects of warfare on Yąnamamö culture in general and on their social organization and politics in particular (Fig. 1–2).

I collected the data under somewhat trying circumstances, some of which I will describe in order to give the student a rough idea of what is generally meant when anthropologists speak of "culture shock" and "fieldwork." It should be borne in mind, however, that each field situation is in many respects unique, so that the problems I encountered do not necessarily exhaust the range of possible problems other anthropologists have confronted in other areas. There are a few problems, however, that seem to be nearly universal among anthropological fieldworkers, particularly those having to do with eating, bathing, sleeping, lack of privacy and loneliness, or discovering that primitive man is not always as noble as you originally thought.

This is not to state that primitive man everywhere is unpleasant. By way of contrast, I have also done limited fieldwork among the Yąnomamö's northern neighbors, the Carib-speaking Makiritare Indians. This group was very pleasant and charming, all

Fig. 1–2. One way that warfare affects other aspects of Yąnomamö social organization is in the great significance of intervillage alliances. Here members of an allied village dance excitedly in their hosts' village in anticipation of the feast and club-pounding duel that will follow.



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